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TYCHIUS CRASSIROSTRIS KIRSCH,
A WEEVIL NEW TO BRITAIN; WITH SOME
REMARKS ON THE PROBLEM OF THE BRITISH
"T. HAEMATOPUS"

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Some years ago Mr. D. M. Ackland, when working on parts of the P. Harwood collection of British beetles at the Hope Department of Entomology, Oxford University Museum, informed me that he doubted the identity of the species standing therein over the name of *Tychius haematopus* Gyll. and in fact made it, tentatively, *T. crassirostris* Kirsch — a species not recorded from this country. At my suggestion he sent an example for confirmation to Dr. L. Dieckmann in Germany, who duly returned it as that species. The name consequently appears in the new Check List (Kloet & Hincks, 1977), but the insect has not been brought forward as British until now. Mr. Ackland, who is not a coleopterist, thus deserves most of the credit for this novelty to our list and its correct recognition.

T. crassirostris comes in our fauna between *T. flavicollis* Steph. (= *squamulatus* Gyll.) and *T. junceus* Reich, and shows similarities to both. According to Hansen (1965) it has a small tooth under the hind femora, like the former of these; however, Reitter (1916) says nothing of this character for either species, though the tooth is actually very distinct in *flavicollis* at all events. My single *crassirostris* has no such tooth but only a shallow excavation as in the mid femora. It would appear therefore that the post-femoral tooth, if present, can be very indistinct or easily overlooked; it is evidently unreliable as a character, and in what follows will be left out of account.

The present species is known from its allies (in Britain, the two above named) by a number of features, which lend themselves fairly readily to expression in tabular form. As I have seen no male of *crassirostris* I am relying entirely on Hansen (1965) for the male leg-characters; and with only a single female on which to assess them, it is possible that certain differences given here may not be fully dependable. A few of those mentioned by Hansen are not clear in my specimen. These I omit (the most considerable is the hind femoral tooth — see above). With these reservations, *T. crassirostris* should be easy to recognize from the table which follows. It is, if anything, a trifle longer on an average than the other two species.

The elytral scaling is probably the most important and least comparative character in these species.

The sole locality in Britain that can yet be given for *T. crassirostris* is Charmouth, on the west coast of Dorset, from which place a series was found *in coll.* P. Harwood as above. My specimen, from

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his duplicates, on which (together with data culled from Hansen) the above diagnosis has been drawn up, was also labelled *haematopus* and was taken there on 6.vi.26. Others from his collection which I saw briefly were dated 1.v.27. Most likely they were taken on or under the cliffs at the locality stated. The species occurs in central and southern Europe, but is generally rare. Reitter and Hansen agree in giving the foodplant as *Melilotus*, especially *M. albus*, whilst the

	<i>flavicollis</i>	<i>crassirostris</i>	<i>junceus</i>
Rostrum	Long & slender	Short & unusually thick	Intermediate, about usual for the genus
Its apical portion in side view	Not tapered	Strongly narrowed & pointed	Somewhat tapered & pointed
Antennal scape	Strongly dilating from well beyond middle	Strongly dilating from about middle	Gradually & rather feebly dilating
Pronotum	Transverse	About as broad as long	Transverse
Elytral humeri	Rather square & well marked	Little marked, sloping, almost effaced	As <i>flavicollis</i> (elytra noticeably short, cordiform)
Individual elytral scales	Short-oblong; on sutural interval still shorter, squarish	Elongate, widest near base, attenuate behind	Linear & more hair-like
Covering of scales on elytra	A thick crust along each interval, striae marked by a very small scale in each puncture	Dense, concealing the striae; some groups of shorter paler scales on suture behind	Less dense; uniform, even on suture & striae, the latter indistinctly visible
Fore & mid tibiae	Inner margin incurved towards apex & ending in a strong tooth, especially in ♂	♂ : inner margin incurved towards apex & set with a row of white outstanding hairs. ♀ : simple, straight, apical tooth very small, hardly visible from above	♂ : about as <i>flavicollis</i> . ♀ : about intermediate between ♀ <i>flavicollis</i> & ♀ <i>crassirostris</i>
Underside of fore femora in ♂	Simple	With a fringe of white, pointed, erect scales	Simple or (<i>teste</i> A. Hoffmann) with a few setae, not a definite fringe

latter author notes its occurrence in June and August in Denmark and that the larvae live in galls on the leaves. Collectors should look out for it on the south coast on white melilot, etc.

The problem of Tychius haematopus auct. Brit. — Since *T. crassirostris* has been found in a major British collection doing duty for *T. haematopus* Gyll. (introduced into our list in 1910), that could well be the case with others formed during the same period. Some reference should therefore be made to the vexed question of what species was understood by British authors under that name, now the true *haematopus* of Gyllenhal is synonymized with the rather common *T. junceus* Reich (*testibus* A. Hoffmann, L. Dieckmann; cf. Kloet & Hincks, 1977). Yet under these two names, James Edwards (1910) characterized in some detail what would appear to be two distinct species (cf. also Fowler & Donisthorpe, 1913). In this he was followed by Donisthorpe (1910), Joy (1932), and Kloet & Hincks (1945); but challenged by Newbery (1920), who thought there were indeed two species involved (confirmed for him by Bedel and Deville) but that only one of them, *junceus*, was British, and that Edwards had probably been misled by its variation. This drew a prompt rejoinder from Edwards (1920), emphatically restating his view of the matter, and mentioning that his *haematopus* had been named for him by Dr. Everts [in Holland].

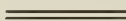
I have examined a specimen in the Power collection (BMNH) purporting to be one of Bennett's original batch of "haematopus" from near Hastings, on which Edwards based his diagnosis; and another, separated as that species by Blair from Power's series of *junceus*. Both appear to me to be indistinguishable from the last-named, and the same applies to two others labelled *haematopus* by Joy but *junceus* by Blair. Up to now I have seen nothing to suggest that we have more than one species under these names. (The *haematopus* Gyll. of Reitter (1916), for which he gives as synonyms *junceus* Boh., Bris., non Reich, must be some other species.)

Perhaps the confusion stems in the first place from the fact (pointed out by Hoffmann, 1954) that Bedel was mistaken in attributing to *junceus* a fringe of hair-scales beneath the front femora of the male — in which he was followed by Edwards, whereas Joy assigns this character to *haematopus*.¹ Differences of shape and scaling were also alleged to exist. I have yet to see a male *junceus* possessing such a fringe, whilst the species that *does* have this character is *crassirostris*! It would indeed be a neat solution of the puzzle were our so-called *haematopus* found to be that species, but, despite one or two pointers towards it, the idea is untenable. It looks as though Edwards and other competent coleopterists of his time, both here and abroad, must have been led astray in some way — unless there really is a species next to *junceus* unaccounted for.

¹As "very fine outstanding pubescence". Presumably, the transposition of this character (thus contradicting Edwards) is but one of the many errors of this sort in Joy's book.

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DEATH OF HYMENOPTERA IN MOTH TRAPS. — I was interested to read J. C. A. Craik's comments on the rather rapid exhaustion and death of hornets in his New Forest moth trap (*Ent. Rec.* 92: 244-245). Most operators of MV traps must have noticed the same phenomenon affecting trapped wasps, and perhaps less obviously males (at least) of parasitic Hymenoptera. The sub-order Apocrita, to which all these insects belong, feed on protein-rich media as larvae but as adults are dependent on very frequent ingestion of sugars (eg. nectar, honeydew, sap, ripe fruit) in order to remain alive, let alone active, at normal summer temperatures. If worker wasps are kept unfed in pill boxes they often die overnight and almost invariably do so within 24 hours, unless their activity and metabolism is slowed down by refrigeration. Males of parasitic Hymenoptera generally do little better, although females of very many species are able to resorb maturing eggs, liberating sufficient nutrients to get them through temporarily hard times by this reversible suspension of their reproductive abilities. Males, and worker vespids, do not in general have access to a substantial food reservoir and their rapid demise in moth traps is probably a combination of their isolation from sugars and the relatively high, activity-inducing temperatures which prevail inside moth traps owing to the "glasshouse effect". — Dr. M. R. SHAW, Dept. of Natural History, Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh EH1 1JF.